

THE IMPACT OF OVERTOURISM ON FOREIGN TOURIST VISITS TO BALI: A CASE STUDY OF THE FAILURE OF FODOR'S NO LIST 2025

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Abstract. Bali is one of the tourist destinations recommended against visiting by tourists on the Fodor's No List 2025. The reason is that overtourism has had various negative impacts on the local population, social environment, natural resources, foreign tourists, and tourism quality. Overtourism has led to an increase in waste littering tourist attractions like Kuta Beach, and has resulted in the loss of agricultural land and rice paddies due to the use of buildings and infrastructure to support tourism businesses. This study aimed to examine the impact of the Fodor's No List 2025 on foreign tourist visits to Bali, which were predicted to decline. However, the study results show an increase in foreign tourist visits, reaching 7.05 million. In 2024, the number of visits reached 6.3 million. This number of visits is a record high in the last ten years. The study also examined the various impacts of overtourism on local residents' activities, the social and natural environment, waste pollution, natural resources, and tourism quality.

Keywords: Bali; Fodor's No List 2025; Foreign Tourist; Overtourism; Tourism; Waste

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector is the third largest contributor to foreign exchange after palm oil and coal. As of the third quarter of January-August 2025, the tourism sector's contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reached IDR 231.01 trillion (3.96 percent), employing 25.91 million people. In the same period in 2024, foreign exchange earnings from the tourism sector reached USD 13.82 billion. This figure indicates that the tourism sector has experienced significant growth, both in terms of the number of visits and revenue. The tourism sector is one of the backbones of the national and local economies, such as Bali, which relies heavily on it.

Bali has long been a popular global tourist destination and a mainstay of the Indonesian government. Bali alone generated IDR 80 trillion in foreign exchange in 2024. Meanwhile, tourism's overall contribution to the Balinese economy is estimated at around 60-70%. Bali's economy is heavily reliant on tourism, providing approximately 58,000 jobs. More than 20% of Bali's population depends directly on this sector. This percentage continues to grow in line with the growth of the tourism sector. The development of the tourism sector in Bali has become uncontrolled, many new tourist attractions have been built by the government and private sector which has caused various problems such as overtourism.

The number of international tourists visiting Bali in 2025 is projected to reach a ten-year high of 7.05 million. This figure surpasses the previous year's 6.3 million. Australian tourists will be the largest contributor, with between 1.3 million and 1.5 million visits throughout 2025, representing approximately 23-25 percent of the total number of international tourists. Australian tourists even dominated visits during the 2025-2026 Christmas and New Year holidays. The largest number of international tourists is followed by tourists from India, China, and South Korea. Most foreign tourists visit the Kuta tourist destination, especially Kuta Beach, located in Badung Regency, South Bali. In reality, overtourism is occurring in South Bali. While

North Bali is still a large area, its tourism offerings are not as diverse as South Bali, particularly its beaches of Kuta, Legian, and Seminyak, which are the main draws for foreign tourists.

Conversely, there has been a decline in the number of domestic tourists, estimated at around 1 million compared to 2024's 10.1 million. As of December 26, 2025, the number of domestic tourists visiting Bali had only reached 9.2 million. Similarly, domestic passenger arrivals through Ngurah Rai Airport, at 211,454, decreased compared to 219,713 in 2024. This decline was caused by various internal and external factors, including issues of bad or extreme weather, limited collective leave, and expensive airfare compared to international flights to Singapore or Thailand. Some domestic tourists chose to vacation in these countries or visit local destinations like Yogyakarta.

Fodor, an American travel publication, released Fodor's No List 2025, which included Bali as a tourist destination to consider avoiding due to overtourism. Some destinations that have experienced overtourism on the 2025 Fodor's Banned List include Barcelona, Venice, Lisbon, Koh Samui, Tokyo, Kyoto, and Mount Everest. Most of these destinations are experiencing social and environmental pressures, with infrastructure unable to accommodate the large number of foreign tourists exceeding their capacity. Most of these destinations are experiencing social and environmental pressures, with infrastructure unable to accommodate the large number of foreign tourists. Some local residents have objected to the excessive number of foreign tourists causing various problems, including congestion, noise pollution, rising prices, and more.

This study aims to examine the negative impacts of overtourism caused by the significant increase in tourist visits to Bali. However, overtourism has caused various social, cultural, and environmental problems. Some foreign tourists disregard Balinese culture, for example, disrespecting local customs or religious temple buildings. However, the most severe impact on the environment is the conversion of productive land into commercial buildings such as hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, and others. Another impact of overtourism is an increase in waste volume, particularly plastic waste from food, drinks, and shopping. Furthermore, research into the release of Fodor's 2025 List No. 1 on foreign tourist visits to Bali revealed that the number of foreign visitors to Bali was unaffected by the release. In fact, it increased compared to previous years. The number of foreign tourist visits in 2025 was the highest in the last 10 years.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Tourist, Tourism

UNWTO (2018) states that tourism is the world's most rapidly growing and ubiquitous business, and it has surely played a major role in the development and functioning of the global capitalist system (Milano, 2019). Tourism can have both positive and negative impacts on society as well as natural and cultural monuments (Boháč and Drápela, 2022). Tourism, according to Kurek and Mika (2008), is the term used to describe people who temporarily relocate outside of their home country due to socially conditioned requirements that are recognised by different sorts of motivation (Hałcia, 2018). At the same time, tourism's role in local, regional, and worldwide environmental problems such as pollution, poor air quality, and climate change has become extremely troublesome and is expected to grow even more (Koens et al., 2021). Travelling for a brief period of time away from one's usual residence and place of employment is the essence of tourism (Hałcia, 2018). Visiting various locations and attractions for leisure, business, health, or other reasons is known as tourism (Soteriades and Van Zyl, 2016). The primary concern in the tourism industry is sustainability (Pahrudin et al., 2022). In every nation, the tourist industry generates employment possibilities and business and economic growth

(Pahrudin et al., 2022). Tourists can be divided into three different categories, according to UNWTO (Sutrisno, 2024).

2.2 Overtourism

Menurut Fodor's No List yang dirilis tahun 2025 bahwa overtourism terjadi di berbagai destinasi wisata populer di dunia seperti Koh Samui (Thailand), Mount Everest (Nepal), Barcelona, (Spain), Mallorca (Spain), Canary Islands (Spain), Venice (Italy), Lisbon (Portugal), dan Bali (Indonesia). Overtourism is associated with a number of negative outcomes, including declining quality of life, rising costs for goods, rising property and rental prices, touristification, overburdened infrastructure, a decline in the destination's brand image, a diminished sense of community, increased traffic, the privatisation of public areas, high visitor/resident ratios, environmental degradation, antisocial behaviour, and the breakdown of socio-cultural connectivity (Blázquez-Salom et al., 2021). Overtourism is more of an abstract idea that has no direct bearing on locals' daily lives (Adie et al., 2019). The term "overtourism" mostly emerged from media discourses (Koens et al., 2018). The phrase "overtourism" has been specifically associated with negative effects of tourism on locals' quality of life (García-Buades et al., 2022) which is not a recent development. The word "overtourism" has gained widespread recognition and discussion (Benner, 2020), is not a new phenomenon (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2019). The phrase "overtourism" has gained popularity due to the growing strain that tourism is placing on metropolitan areas (Koens et al., 2021). Scholarly research on overtourism is relatively new (Blázquez-Salom et al., 2021). The repercussions of overtourism, including pollution, tourismphobia, and anti-tourism movements, are the main focus of current research (Seraphin et al., 2019). The term "overtourism," which refers to a situation where tourism "excessively influences the perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitors' experiences in a negative way," has become popular due to the increasing pressure that tourism is placing on urban destinations (Koens et al., 2021). Overtourism in cities, which affects social and urban landscapes, devalues the tourist experience, and undermines the quality of everyday urban life (Pasquinelli and Trunfio, 2020). Overtourism has resulted from a combination of a number of factors, which together have created a "perfect storm" of visitors to specific sites (Dodds and Butler, 2019). This term is used by the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) (Boháč and Drápela, 2022), is "the impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitors experiences in a negative way," according to a recent UNWTO study (Kušcer and Mihalič, 2019). Overtourism is said to be tourism that not only decreases the quality of life of the residents of a tourist destination, but also diminishes the tourist experience (Krajickova et al., 2022). Overtourism has posed serious problems for many destinations in recent years (Krajickova et al., 2022). The main causes of overtourism are frequently cited as the enormous increase in visitors in recent years, travelers' propensity to visit well-known locations at the same times, and new aspects of contemporary tourism (Żemła and Szromek, 2021). Growing visitor arrivals impose increasing pressure on destinations (Kušcer and Mihalič, 2019) which has become a significant problem for both locals and visitors (Capocchi et al., 2019) Overtourism suggests unsustainable tourism (Mihalic and Kušcer, 2022). The Italian city of Venice has become an emblematic example of a destination struggling with what is now frequently called overtourism (Bertocchi et al., 2020). Another contemporary term is "tourismphobia," which was coined in 2008 (Celata, 2020).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The phenomenon of overtourism occurs in various popular tourist destinations around the world, including Bali. Overtourism has caused various problems for both tourists and local residents. They are disturbed by the excessive number of foreign tourists. However, their economies are heavily dependent on this sector. This research focuses on the various impacts of overtourism and the impact of the release of Fodor's No List 2025 on foreign tourist visits to Bali. This research uses an exploratory qualitative approach, utilizing literature presented inductively at the beginning of the study (Creswell, 2024). Qualitative research is often associated with an inductive, bottom-up approach to data analysis (Fife & Gossner, 2024), which generates perspectives on the context of a problem, along with ideas and propositions (Ghanad, 2023).

One of the most widely used approaches in qualitative social research is the case study, which allows researchers to choose whatever data collection method best suits their objectives due to its in-depth nature (Priya, 2021). Yin (2014) stated that case study techniques typically consist of specific features and narratives that are well-structured and naturally reflect the contradictions and complexities of real-life phenomena (Çakar & Aykol, 2020). Stake (1995) classified case studies into three categories: collective, instrumental, and intrinsic (Baxter and Jack, 2008). Stake (1995) distinguished three types of cases: intrinsic cases, instrumental cases, and group instrumental cases (Carter, 2020). There are many ways to describe a case study, but the basic idea is that an event or phenomenon must be thoroughly examined in its natural setting (Crowe et al., 2011). This research uses a case study because it is considered an appropriate method for analyzing overtourism in Bali. The research data was obtained from primary sources, namely interviews with tourism business operators in Bali, as well as secondary data, particularly from the internet and scientific journals.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Fodor's No List

Fodor's Travel is an online travel guide and tourism information company based in the United States. The company provides advice from experts and local writers on destinations worldwide, covering top attractions, restaurants, cultural insights, hotels, and transportation. The goal is to help travelers by providing recommendations and practical tips for planning their trips. These suggestions and recommendations are published in Fodor's No List. These recommendations are published in the Fodor's Not Recommended List, which is released annually. The Fodor's No List has several goals: 1. Raising awareness, encouraging travelers to consider the impact of their visits; 2. Supporting sustainable tourism, encouraging destinations and travelers to practice more responsible tourism; and 3. Encouraging more thoughtful visits or alternative destinations (Pramana, 2024).

Fodor's Travel acts as a trusted companion, providing options to help travelers make informed choices and enjoy destinations comfortably. Overtourism can have various negative impacts on destinations, local residents, and tourists. Overtourism causes an imbalance between the number of visitors and the capacity of a tourist attraction, which can cause discomfort for tourists. The image below shows the conditions and atmosphere of tourist attractions in Bali, which are filled with both foreign and local tourists. Overcrowded tourist attractions result in a decline in service quality, making tourists feel restricted and uncomfortable. Fodor's No List is not a call to boycott these places, but rather to consider visiting tourist destinations that are not experiencing overtourism.



Fig. 1 (Left) Kuta Beach, crowded with foreign tourists, creates a less relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. (Right) A view of a bathing area filled with local tourists. Source: Internet.

Overtourism is defined as a condition in which the number of tourists exceeds the carrying capacity of the local environment and culture. Overtourism is exacerbated by the availability of low-cost airlines, affordable accommodations like Airbnb, easy visa requirements, and social media trends. Many foreign tourists stay in local homes or rented accommodations, some of which are operated by Airbnb, with rental rates significantly lower than hotel rates. One cause of overtourism is the affordability of affordable accommodations, which attract more tourists. Furthermore, the local economy relies heavily on the tourism sector. Over 60% of Regional Original Income (PAD) and economic growth of Bali rely on the tourism industry. Hotel and restaurant taxes have been the largest contributors to PAD. Therefore, various incentives are provided for the tourism sector by the Bali Regional Government and the Central Government, which rely on foreign exchange from the sector. However, the negative aspects of the tourism sector are often overlooked.

4.2 Overtourism and Its Negative Impacts

Overtourism can negatively impact all parties, such as declining tourism quality, disrupting access and the routine activities of local residents, and so on. Overtourism in Bali can disrupt religious ceremonies, increase vehicle traffic, cause congestion, contribute to air and noise pollution, increase waste volume, and much more. Every year-end, especially around New Year's Eve, roads in and around Kuta experience severe traffic congestion due to the large number of vehicles. Similarly, Kuta Beach is flooded with many foreign and domestic tourists. As a result, the beauty and tranquility of Kuta Beach are lost due to the influx of tourists. The volume of waste increases drastically, especially at the turn of the new year, which litters the entire Kuta beach. In addition to the unbalanced capacity, there is also a lack of trash receptacles on the beach.

The negative impact of overtourism is the reduction of productive land due to its conversion to commercial buildings such as hotels, guesthouses, cafes, and other facilities. This uncontrolled development and suboptimal management have led to the conversion of productive land, such as fields and rice paddies, into commercial buildings such as hotels, restaurants, cafes, villas, residences, and supporting tourism businesses such as roads. Bali is estimated to have lost 6,521.81 hectares of rice fields, a 9.19 percent decrease, as farmers and landowners have opted to build villas, residences, shophouses, and other developments. The rationale is that building tourist facilities is more profitable than engaging in agricultural activities. This development is aimed at meeting the need for accommodation and other supporting facilities for tourists, as the number of visits continues to rise. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), between 2000 and 2023, the number of hotels in Bali increased sharply from 113 to 541, with the number of rooms increasing from 19,000 to 54,000. This hotel development is solely for the benefit of the tourism sector, converting productive land such as rice fields. In 2020, the remaining rice fields in Badung Regency and Denpasar City were

approximately 3,000 hectares. Over 20 years, this area has decreased by 4,334.01 hectares, or 23.44 percent. This reduction in rice fields will continue to increase with overtourism.

Another negative impact is increased waste generation, including plastic waste. According to Fodor's, Bali's tourist destinations are being accused of experiencing a "plastic apocalypse." The island produces approximately 1.6 million tons of waste annually, but only about 48% is managed. The rest is dumped on land, in drains, rivers, and the ocean. The waste problem on the beaches of Kuta, Legian, and Seminyak is a classic problem that occurs every west wind season from October to April. Various types of waste, such as wood, tree branches, and plastic, are washed from the ocean onto the beaches by the west winds, leaving the beaches dirty. As a result, these beaches are unavailable to foreign tourists. Kuta Beach is Bali's premier tourist attraction and is very popular worldwide. Activities such as swimming and surfing are disrupted.



Fig. 2. Condition of Kuta Beach, a popular and leading tourist attraction in Bali, which receives shipments of wood, twigs, and plastic waste from the middle of the sea, as well as waste produced by tourists (Source: Internet).

Based on data from the National Waste Management Information System (SIPSN), waste generation in Bali Province will reach 1.2 million tons in 2024. Bali produces 1.6 million tons of waste annually. Meanwhile, plastic waste reaches nearly 303,000 tons, but only 7% of it is recycled. This very small percentage has caused a major problem because plastic waste is strong and difficult to decompose. The largest contributor of waste is Denpasar City, reaching around 360,000 tons. This waste is dominated by organic waste originating from food scraps and tree branches, reaching 68.32 percent. However, waste can negatively impact the tourism sector by reducing the number of tourist visits. Waste also caused flash floods in September 2025, caused by waste clogging waterways and being washed into rivers. Furthermore, the width of rivers is narrowed because some of the banks are used for buildings. Their depths become shallow, making them unable to accommodate large water discharges. However, poorly planned spatial planning and development can exacerbate the impact of flooding, especially in flood-prone areas. Bali's drainage system is unable to accommodate the large volume of water, causing flooding to spread onto roads, residential areas, and public facilities.

The main problem in Bali is the waste crisis, particularly plastic waste such as mineral water bottles containing less than one liter, plastic cups for mineral drinks and coffee, plastic and Styrofoam food containers, and plastic bags. Mineral water producers are prohibited from producing plastic containers containing less than one liter, as instructed by Bali Governor Wayan Koster (Kusuma and Negara, 2025). This regulation has been fully enforced since January 2026. According to data from Sungai Watch's 2024 Brand Audit, a major mineral water producer contributed 10,334 items of plastic cup packaging in Bali. This amounts to a total of 39,480 items of single-use plastic waste in Bali and East Java. This type of waste is difficult to recycle, has low

economic value, and often pollutes beaches and the ocean (Rakhmi, 2025). Since February 14, 2024, the Bali Provincial Government has implemented a levy of IDR 150,000 per visit. In the first half of 2024, Bali earned IDR 181 billion from the levy from foreign tourists. The purpose of this levy is to maintain the balance of nature and tourism in Bali, including waste management. Revenue from the snorkeling levy in Nusa Penida reached IDR 2 billion. However, the waste problem is not that simple, even with the budget allocated for its management.

Overtourism causes severe traffic congestion and environmental degradation. Congestion often occurs in the Kuta area due to narrow roads and the increasing number of vehicles. Most domestic tourists visit Bali using private vehicles because they make it easier to visit many tourist attractions. It is more economical than renting transportation in Bali. These vehicles add to the congestion. Foreign tourists, meanwhile, use rental vehicles such as buses, online cars like Grab, and rental motorbikes. In addition to causing congestion, these vehicles contribute to air pollution.

Some villas are built in water catchment areas and rice paddies. This conversion of productive land can threaten food security and the clean water crisis. Traditional practices such as the Subak irrigation system, which has supported rice fields for centuries, are now under pressure as water is diverted to tourist areas. This is despite the Subak irrigation system in Bali being designated a World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO on June 29, 2012, at a World Heritage Committee meeting in Saint Petersburg, Russia. Recently, 13 tourist accommodation buildings were discovered violating Regional Regulation (Perda) Number 3 of 2023 in the Jatiluwih World Cultural Heritage area.

Several buildings in Denpasar City stand on riverbanks, reducing the river's width. Furthermore, plastic waste has blocked waterways, causing the river to overflow onto roads. Poor waste management has blocked drains and rivers. The Ayung River basin, which spans 49,500 hectares and encompasses several important rivers, such as the Badung, Mati, and Singapadu, is covered in trash. During flash floods in September, rivers and bridges were blocked by debris such as wood lying on the banks.

CONCLUSION

Overtourism has negatively impacted local residents, tourist services, the natural environment, water resources, traffic congestion, overcrowding at Kuta Beach, air pollution, water pollution, and waste pollution. Waste pollution is so critical that Fodor's calls it the "Plastic Waste Apocalypse." Therefore, Fodor's again recommends Bali as one of the tourist destinations not to visit in 2025. The reason is that Bali is experiencing overtourism and a "Plastic Waste Apocalypse." Fodor's considers waste to be the main problem facing Bali's tourist destinations, especially the waste that washes up on Kuta Beach. In fact, much of the waste is produced by domestic tourists who litter carelessly, including when visiting Kuta Beach. Waste in Bali can disrupt the natural environment and can reduce the quality of tourism services and the number of foreign tourists to Kuta Beach. In fact, much of the waste from the sea originates from other regions or islands. Previously, Fodor's recommended not to visit Bali, which was released in Fodor's No List in 2020. However, in fact, the recommendation of Fodor's No List 2025 has been ignored by foreign tourists. In fact, foreign tourist visits to Bali in 2025 were the highest in the last 10 years, reaching 7.05 million foreign tourists.

According to the Bali Regional Government, what is currently happening in Bali is not overtourism, but rather a concentration of tourism activities in Nusa Dua and South Bali, particularly the Kuta Beach tourist destination in Badung Regency. Most tourists, especially foreign tourists, visit the Kuta area because it has a complete tourism ecosystem. Furthermore, the Kuta area is the center of the tourism business in Bali. Meanwhile, North Bali's tourist attractions are less complete, including the lack of beaches as beautiful as Kuta Beach.

The Kuta area offers numerous amenities, not just its beaches, but also hotels, restaurants, and cafes (Horeca) that operate day and night. In addition to visiting as foreign tourists, some of them engage in business activities, such as working as guides, villa owners, restaurant owners, and cafe owners, as Kuta also serves as Bali's business epicenter. These business activities contribute to the reduction of productive land in Bali.

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